

MINUTES
of the
OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ADVISORY GROUP (OHVAG)
of
ARIZONA STATE PARKS
MEETING OF February 19, 2009
Bureau of Land Management Offices
One North Central, Phoenix, AZ

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 1:20pm. Ms. Shulman called the roll and announced a quorum.

Committee Members Present: Hank Rogers
 Drew John
 Pete Pfeifer (*via telephone*)
 Robert Biegel
 John Savino

Committee Members Absent: Jim Schreiner
 Rebecca Antle

Arizona State Parks (ASP) Staff: Amy Racki, OHV Coordinator
 Bob Baldwin, Grants Coordinator
 Ruth Shulman, ASP

Other Individuals Present: Sandee McCullen, former OHVAG member
 Bill Gibson, BLM
 Donna Myers, ASU
 David Moore, prospective OHVAG member

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

Members and Staff introduced themselves.

C. ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of Minutes from the November 7, 2008 Meeting

Mr. Biegel moved to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. John seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

2. Consider Re-obligation of FY2004 Recreational Trails Program (Motorized Portion) (RTPMP) Grant Funds

Mr. Baldwin noted that in 2005, the RTPMP awarded \$403,937 to Moto-Trax, Inc. to acquire land for an OHV park. They were, however, unable to complete the acquisition, and withdrew from the grant in 2008. The grant funds come from the TEA-21 Federal

program, which requires a 20% match and that 5% of the total project must come from non-federal sources. The funds must be expended by September 2010.

The BLM has submitted a list of projects that meet the requirements for the program. The BLM has also submitted information on their matching funds. The project list from BLM will benefit OHV users statewide.

Chair Rogers asked whether it would be possible for other groups with projects to use the money. Mr. Baldwin said that it may be possible through the BLM. Mr. John asked if the funds were in danger of being “swept” by the State Legislature. Mr. Baldwin said that there is no danger of that, as these are Federal funds.

Mr. Baldwin emphasized that the funds must be expended by September 2010, so there is a tight time turnaround. Further discussion on the possibility of partnerships with the BLM on some statewide projects followed. Mr. Baldwin said that the Project Agreement could be crafted to allow for flexibility of projects. The effects of the Federal Stimulus Program were also discussed. Ms. Racki noted that the OHVAG’s recommendation must be presented to the ASP Board before the agreement could be executed.

Mr. Savino noted that the Standard Wash access project in Havasu has not had anything accomplished. Mr. Gibson noted that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is responsible for much of that project (turnoff from the highway) and it’s currently unclear about the status of their portion. The take-out area is still in the process of archaeological and wildlife survey.

Mr. John moved that \$403,937 and other unexpended TEA-21 RTP project funds upon availability be awarded to BLM-Arizona State Office contingent upon all projects completing the Section 106 requirements and obtaining National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) concurrence from the Federal Highway Administration, and that this recommendation be forwarded to the Arizona State Parks Board for final action. Mr. Pfeifer seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

3. Elect an OHVAG Member to Serve as a Liaison on the Grant Rating Team for the 2009 Recreational Trails Program (Motorized Portion) Grant Applications

Mr. Baldwin provided background on the liaison. OHVAG appoints one member each year to sit on the rating team for the RTPMP grants. The OHVAG liaison does not vote on the grants, but does provide input to the rating process from the OHV user’s perspective. The liaison must commit to two meetings; one is short and the grant applications are distributed for review, and to discuss the grant criteria. The other meeting is the grant rating meeting itself. The grant rating team reaches a consensus on awarding the grants. The liaison then makes a report to OHVAG on the experience. Applications are due the end of March; Mr. Baldwin says that he has had three potential applicants “check in”. Mr. John moved to appoint Mr. Savino as liaison to the FY2009 grant rating team. Mr. Savino seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

Mr. Baldwin also noted that the Trails 2010 Plan will contain the trail priorities for the state, which will affect the grant rating criteria in the future. There will be a task force set up to discuss the Trails Plan as well as the new funds available under the OHV Legislation.

4. Status of OHV Recreation Fund Projects (OHVRFP)

Ms. Racki distributed a hand out showing the projects' status following the funds sweep by the Legislature. She also noted that the OHV web page under the ASP website has been updated and improved, and gave OHVAG a brief tour.

She then noted that the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) says that the total decal sales amount to \$535,318 in January. There are some discussions underway of grants and agreement programs. Ms. Racki will obtain clarification and provide an update to OHVAG as soon as possible.

Ms. Racki also noted that the small projects program will not be much affected if the ASP Board decides to cancel grant payments since most agencies submitted their final payment requests or did not start their projects. At this point, the dealer program is in a "maintenance mode."

The Outdoor Information Center is now up and running. Ms. Racki noted that the "Nature Rules" stay on trails campaign message changed to "Nature Rules Stay On Roads and Trails". Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) adopted the message.

The OHV Ambassadors program is undergoing a change to achieve more administration by the Ambassadors. Some of the RTPMP education funds will go toward a "train the trainer" program in OHV vehicle safety and first aid/CPR. These changes will allow the Ambassadors to provide greater program involvement.

5. Discuss 2010 Trails Plan

Ms. Racki provided OHVAG with a draft of the priority recommendations to go into the Trails Plan. The priorities were determined by the survey results conducted across the state. The top priorities on the list were upkeep and renovation of existing trails, acquisition of new trails, and mitigation. Second level priorities include route identification, education, signs and maps, and an "on-the-ground" presence. Third level priorities are improving facilities, planning and interagency cooperation and volunteer coordination. Ms. Racki noted that all of these priorities may not receive funding, but she wanted to solicit comments from OHVAG.

Chair Rogers said that trail building is the most important priority for OHV users in the state. Mr. John agreed, saying that trails need to be established and *designated* (emphasis by Mr. John) because designation as an OHV route keeps the route open and available. Mr. Biegel said that access and designation have been high in grant projects so far. Mr. Gibson noted that the BLM is working on route designation now. Ms. Racki said that these priorities will affect the grant criteria for the next five years. Mr. Biegel noted that grants should be given only to open trails; Ms. Racki noted that this would be an internal

ASP policy. Mr. John said that trails designation, signage and maps are the most important priorities. Ms. Racki noted that the priorities are based on extensive input of trail users throughout the state.

6. Discuss OHV Legislation

Ms. Racki said that reciprocity with other states is still being ironed out. The main issue is to determine whether out-of-state recreationists can receive the OHV decal from the MVD without surrendering their plates. Mr. Savino noted that it is illegal if not impossible for “out-of-staters” to put the Arizona sticker on their license plates. This led to a discussion of vehicles that don’t have license plates and where the vehicle sticker should be placed in those cases. Mr. John noted that one important point of the legislation was to reduce OHV theft in Arizona.

Ms. Racki provided OHVAG members with new flyers regarding the new legislation and OHV owners’ responsibilities. There is another pending bill regarding gasoline tax (SB1181), which Chair Rogers said was designed to eliminate taxes except on aviation fuel. His feeling is that the bill would not likely pass. Ms. Racki will keep OHVAG informed on SB1181 and any proposed upgrades to the current OHV legislation.

7. Discuss Arizona State Parks Board OHV Ad Hoc Committee

Ms. Racki said that the ASP Board had formed an ad hoc subcommittee, which had its first meeting. When asked about the mission of the subcommittee, Tracey Westerhausen (an ASP Board member and chair of the subcommittee) read into the subcommittee’s minutes the words of then-Board Chair William Scalzo that the subcommittee mission was to discuss and present ways to deal with the new income flow. The aim of the subcommittee was not to reorganize OHVAG. The first subcommittee discussed the composition of the group, with a motion to include the current subcommittee Chair (Tracey Westerhausen) and Vice-Chair (Larry Landry), a member of the AGFD, a member of the OHV community in Arizona and one other member to be determined. This proposal will be presented to the ASP Board at their meeting on Friday, February 20.

D. PRESENTATIONS

1. Trails 2010 Plan Survey Results

Ms. Donna Myers from Arizona State University (ASU) gave a PowerPoint presentation (copies available) on the results of the surveys conducted in relation to the Trails 2010 Plan. The survey results reflect information gathered by ASU, ASP and land managers across the state.

There was a random survey of landline telephone users, with a response rate of 34% and 64% cooperation rate. The online land manager’s survey received a response rate of 52% out of 360 responders.

Survey results show that satisfaction with trails recreation is high across the state. Twenty-two percent of responders said they used trails to recreate at least once per year. A further 11% said that trails accounted for the bulk of their recreation. The

slides did show that there are more non-motorized trails users than motorized trails users.

There were slides regarding what types of motorized usage were prevalent in the state. Another slide showed that motorized trails users are 50% satisfied with the trails recreation opportunities in the state, and 25% are very satisfied. Mr. John noted that those who responded they were not satisfied may not know where they should be riding.

Survey participants were asked whether motorized and non-motorized trails should be separate. As was true during the last survey five years ago, the non-motorized trails users preferred separation; the motorized users expressed no preference either way.

Another survey question asked about the environmental issues for motorized users and land managers. Those results were: for motorized users – litter, damaged vegetation, and decreased wildlife sightings. Ms. Racki noted that these concerns would likely not drive how ASP spends the new income. Land managers concerns were damage to vegetation, erosion, and dust/particulate matter in the air.

Winding up the presentation were slides showing the trails priorities for both motorized users and land managers. For motorized users, the priorities were trails access and land acquisition. For land managers, the priorities were law enforcement and an “on-the-ground” presence.

Another piece of information was that land managers rate the grants program and ASP Staff high, but they do not really use the Trails Plan to set priorities.

OHVAG thanked Ms. Myers for her presentation.

2. Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) Inclusion and OHV

This item rescheduled to the Recreational Trails Plan (joint) meeting on May 15, 2009.

E. REPORTS

1. Chair’s Report – The Chair had no report at this time.

2. Staff Reports

a) Update on ASP Board Actions

Ms. Racki noted that the only ASP Board action that affected OHVAG was the formation of the OHV Ad Hoc Subcommittee. Mr. Pfeifer noted that he is concerned that the subcommittee is not representative of the OHV community, who are after all the people providing the revenue through registrations. There will be a status report to OHVAG at the May meeting.

b) Status of Current RTPMP Trail Projects

Mr. Baldwin stated that he will provide this report at the May 15 joint meeting.

F. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No response.

**G. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS, MATTERS OF BOARD
PROCEDURE, REQUESTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Mr. John discussed the economic difficulties facing the counties and municipalities, which will likely also affect the quality of life.

H. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

May 15, 2009 – Joint Meeting with ASCOT – 9:00am; OHVAG meeting at 1:00pm

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Biegel moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Savino seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 3:35pm.